IN THE CLAIMS

1-15.   (canceled)

16.   (currently amended) A web-based shipping system for facilitating selection of at least one shipping carrier, said system comprising:

a client sub-system comprising a browser;

a centralized database for storing carrier information;

a server sub-system configured to be coupled to said client sub-system and said centralized database, said server sub-system further configured to:

receive shipping information from a user via the client sub-system;

compare the shipping information against pre-stored information;

select at least one shipping carrier which matches the shipping information;

display the selected shipping carrier based on the shipping ~~information; and~~information;

accept at least one of a user identification number and a password for each department related to the at least one shipping ~~carrier.~~carrier; and

provide a selection from a plurality of modes of printing a shipping label of one of the at least one shipping carrier, wherein the modes include a website of the one of the at least one shipping carrier and an address form that is separate from the website and that includes source and destination addresses.

17.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 16 wherein said client sub-system is configured with:

a displaying component for displaying at least one of a home page user interface, an input interface, a user interface displaying an optimum shipping method,

a user interface displaying alternative options, a user interface displaying the user's final selection, and a user interface that facilitates printing of a label;

a displaying component for displaying at least one of a user interface to access maintenance home page, register a new carrier, modify an existing carrier, add locations, edit locations, add departments, edit department profiles, add users, and edit user profiles, and

a sending component for sending an inquiry to the server sub-system so that the server sub-system can process and download requested information to the client sub-system.

18.   (original) A system according to Claim 17 wherein the sending component functions in response to a click of a mouse button.

19.   (original) A system according to Claim 17 wherein the sending component functions in response to a voice command.

20.   (original) A system according to Claim 17 wherein said system is further configured to be protected from access by unauthorized individuals.

21.   (currently amended) A system according to Claim 17 wherein said server sub-system is further configured with:

a collection component for collecting information from users into the centralized database;

a tracking component for tracking information on an on-going basis;

a displaying component for displaying at least one of a home page user interface, an input interface, a user interface displaying an optimum shipping method, a user interface displaying alternative options, a user interface displaying the user's final selection, and a user interface that facilitates printing of a label;the shipping label;

a displaying component for displaying at least one of a user interface to access maintenance home page, register a new carrier, modify an existing carrier, add

locations, edit locations, add departments, edit department profiles, add users, and edit user profiles;

a receiving component for receiving an inquiry from the client sub-system; and

an accessing component for accessing the centralized database to generate accessed information, said accessing component causing the accessed information to be displayed on the client sub-system.

22.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 21 wherein said server sub-system further configured with a receiving component for receiving an inquiry to provide information from one of a plurality of users.

23.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 21 wherein said server sub-system further configured with a processing component for searching and processing received inquiries against said centralized database containing a variety of information collected by the collection component.

24.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 21 wherein said server sub-system further configured with a retrieving component to retrieve information from the centralized database.

25.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 21 wherein said server sub-system further configured with an information fulfillment component that downloads the accessed information after retrieving from the centralized database to a plurality of users in an order in which inquiries were received by the receiving component.

26.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 16 wherein said server sub-system further configured to:

receive at least one of a package type, a place of origin, a destination, a latest delivery date, a latest time, and a weight of a package;

update the carrier information including the at least one carrier, modify the at least one carrier, add locations of the at least one carrier, edit locations of the at least one carrier, add departments, edit department profiles, add users, and edit user profiles; and

store updated carrier information in the centralized database.

27.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 16 wherein said server sub-system further configured to enter information at least through one of a voice activation command and a device connected to the client sub-system.

28.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 16 wherein said server sub-system further configured to update the carrier information and store the updated carrier information against an identifier.

29.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 16 wherein said server sub-system further configured to:

track the carrier information on a real time basis; and

store the carrier information on a real time basis by updating stored information by adding new information to the centralized database on a real time basis to provide up-to-date carrier information instantaneously to the user upon a request.

30.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 16 wherein said server sub-system further configured to:

download requested information from said server sub-system; and

display requested information on the client sub-system in response to an inquiry.

31.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 30 wherein said server sub-system further configured to print the requested information in a pre-determined format.

32.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 16 wherein said server sub-system further configured to accept an inquiry from a user.

33.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 32 wherein said server sub-system further configured to:

receive an inquiry from the client sub-system; and

display information on the client sub-system.

34.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 33 wherein said server sub-system further configured to submit a request through at least one of pull down menus, check boxes, and hypertext links.

35.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 33 wherein said server sub-system further configured to display an HTML document downloaded by the server sub-system.

36.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 33 wherein said server sub-system further configured to display at least one alternative from various alternatives available to the user.

37.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 30 wherein said server sub-system further configured to:

access the centralized database;

search the centralized database regarding a specific inquiry;

retrieve information from the centralized database; and

transmit the retrieved information to the client sub-system for display by the client sub-system.

38.   (previously presented) A system according to Claim 16 wherein said server sub-system further configured to accept a request for maintenance home page after the user has been authenticated against pre-determined criteria.

39.　(previously presented)　A system according to Claim 16 wherein said client sub-system configured to be a server for a network of customer devices.

40.　(previously presented)　A system according to claim 16 wherein said client sub-system is coupled to said server sub-system via a network, and said network is one of a wide area network, a local area network an intranet and the Internet.